

Scoping Notice

Overland Pass Pipeline Company's Proposed Pipeline from the Piceance Basin to Southern Wyoming



Note public comment period: February 22, 2008 to March 14, 2008

A. Introduction

Overland Pass Pipeline Company, LLC (OPPC), a subsidiary of ONEOK, Inc. and Williams Field Services Company, LLC, proposes to construct a natural gas liquids (NGL) pipeline starting southwest of Meeker, Colorado and running north to their existing pipeline east of Wamsutter, Wyoming. Figure 1 depicts the location of the proposed pipeline. This 14-inch diameter pipeline would approximately parallel other existing pipeline rights-of-way (ROW) for all but 15 to 20 miles of its 153-mile length.

To assess environmental impacts from the proposed project, the BLM will prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA). The EA will identify and evaluate impacts from the proposed project on the physical, biological, and human environment, and will also identify construction and operational measures to mitigate those impacts. The development of the EA will determine whether or not the project would cause significant impacts that require further assessment or would warrant a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

In recent years multiple Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) have been completed for the other pipelines along this proposed corridor. Based on those evaluations, BLM has a good understanding of environmental conditions within the proposed project area. However, we are requesting input from the public to ensure we have a thorough and complete understanding of pertinent issues related to the proposed project.

We would like to hear from you!

We are encouraging public input on the proposed project to help us:

- Identify issues of concern,
- Determine the depth of the analysis needed for issues addressed in the EA,
- Identify additional mitigation measures, and
- Identify reasonable alternatives to be evaluated in the EA.

To help formulate your input, this scoping notice will give you the information you need to understand:

- How, when, and where to comment on the project;
- The location and description of the project;
- The tentative schedule for development of the EA;
- The tentative schedule for construction and operation of the proposed project; and
- The preliminary issues identified for the project.

How do I submit my comments?

First and foremost, the public comment period will end **Friday, March 14, 2008**. Please make sure we receive your comments by then.

To submit your comments, you may:

- Email them to the BLM at:

Overland_comments@blm.gov

- Mail them to:

Kent Walter, Field Manager
Bureau of Land Management
White River Field Office
220 East Market Street
Meeker, CO 81641

- Call Mr. Mark Mackiewicz, the National Project Manager for BLM at:
(435) 636-3616

Please note, before you include your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comments, you should be aware that your entire comment — including your personal identifying information — may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public view, we cannot guarantee anonymity. BLM will not consider anonymous comments. All submissions from organizations and businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be available for public inspection in their entirety.

B. Background

The proposed pipeline would begin at the proposed Willow Springs Plant which is to be located approximately 20 miles southwest of Meeker, Colorado in Township 2 South, Range 97 West, Section 35 (T2S, R97W, S35) in Rio Blanco County, Colorado. The pipeline would then proceed north through Moffat County, Colorado, and Sweetwater County, Wyoming, before it would turn east and terminate at the existing Echo Springs Pump Station located approximately 10 miles east-southeast of Wamsutter, Wyoming in T19N, R93W, S01 in Carbon County, Wyoming (Figure 1).

Approximately 90 percent of the proposed route would follow existing pipeline ROWs with a planned 25-foot offset from the existing pipeline centerline. The nominal construction ROW for the proposed pipeline would be 75 feet, with a 50-foot permanent easement following construction. When completed, the pipeline would transport approximately 100,000 barrels per day of Y-grade NGL.

Approximately 45 percent of the project would cross private land; the remaining 55 percent would cross federal or state land. Most of the federal land crossed by the proposed pipeline is managed by the BLM. The pipeline would cross through the following three BLM field office jurisdictions:

- BLM White River Field Office in Meeker, Colorado;
- BLM Little Snake Field Office in Craig Colorado; and
- BLM Rawlins Field Office in Rawlins, Wyoming.

The BLM White River Field Office in Meeker, Colorado, will be the lead agency for the EA, and will take your comments.

What are natural gas liquids (NGL)?

NGL are hydrocarbon liquids associated with the production and processing of natural gas. When natural gas is extracted from the ground, it is compositionally different than what is transported through natural gas transmission systems and ultimately used by the public for such things as home heating and cooking. When extracted from the ground, the mixture is predominately methane, but also includes heavier hydrocarbons and inert gases. The heavier hydrocarbons are referred to as NGL.

The NGL and inert gases must be removed from the natural gas to make it salable and transportable. Once removed from the natural gas, the NGL are transported to separate processes more suitable for heavier hydrocarbons. Alternate pipelines are needed for this transportation.

What's the purpose and need of this project?

Currently, existing NGL pipelines are operating at or near capacity. The proposed pipeline would address the needs of producers in Colorado and Wyoming by providing additional NGL pipeline capacity from the Rocky Mountain region to new and existing markets. Downstream customers would gain access to the Rocky Mountain supply basin. In summary, approval and construction of the proposed OPPC NGL pipeline would meet the mutual needs of producers and downstream customers, and would further federal policy regarding the development of pipeline infrastructure in the Rocky Mountain region. In addition to being necessary, the removal of NGL from the natural gas stream can enhance the value of the components removed.

Will alternatives to the proposed pipeline corridor be evaluated?

Alternatives will be evaluated in the EA. BLM currently anticipates evaluating three action alternatives: the Proposed Action Alternative, the South Connector Route Alternative, and the North Connector Route Alternative. Additional alternatives may be incorporated into the EA based on input we receive from the public.

The Proposed Action Alternative would be as described above. The other action alternatives are:

- The South Connector Route Alternative would follow the Piceance Creek bottom from the proposed Willow Creek Plant to the Entrega pipeline corridor. This alternative would then parallel the Entrega pipeline until it meets the WIC Piceance Basin Expansion pipeline. From that point, this alternative would follow the proposed pipeline route.
- The North Connector Route Alternative would follow the proposed pipeline route to a point approximately 20-30 miles south-southwest of Wamsutter, Wyoming. At that point it would proceed northeast across greenfields to the pump station at Echo Springs.

Alternatives to transporting NGL by pipeline will also be evaluated. In general, however, an underground NGL pipeline sited largely in existing pipeline ROWs has considerable environmental and safety advantages over alternative means of transport, such as trucking and shipping.

C. Tentative Schedule

The tentative schedule for completing the EA, submitting the EA for public comment, and constructing the pipeline is listed below.

End Public Scoping Comment Period	March 14, 2008
Draft EA	May 30, 2008
Public Comment Period for the EA	June 1–30, 2008
Issue Decision Record	August 29, 2008
Construction Start Date	September 1, 2008
OPPC's Target In-Service Date	July 1, 2009

D. Preliminary Issues and Concerns

Because the proposed pipeline primarily follows existing, recently constructed pipeline ROWs, environmental impacts have been analyzed for the majority of the proposed project in the following EISs:

- Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Piceance Basin Expansion Project (<http://www.ferc.gov/industries/gas/enviro/eis/2005/08-12-05.asp>)
- Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Entrega Pipeline Project (<http://www.ferc.gov/industries/gas/enviro/eis/2005/07-01-05.asp>)

Based on this information, as well as current reclamation efforts for those two projects, the BLM has a preliminary understanding of environmental concerns, and has identified the following issues within the proposed project area. The significance of impacts will be determined based on OPPC proposed mitigation measures for these issues.

- Reclamation and revegetation have proven difficult in the existing pipeline corridor. Reclamation efforts particularly pertaining to the spread and return of noxious and invasive weeds will be addressed in the EA.
- Crossing of rivers tends to cause impacts to fish habitat, surface water quality, and bank stabilization. The proposed project will cross the White River, Yampa River, Dry Fork Piceance Creek, and Little Snake River. OPPC proposes to use horizontal directional drilling (HDD) to cross all but the Little Snake River. OPPC also anticipates using HDD for the Little Snake River; however, they have not finalized that decision. HDD has less impact on rivers as it does not disrupt surface water flow or cause sedimentation within the water.
- Crossing Hay Gulch downstream of the Greasewood Hub will be an issue as the proposed pipeline would cross steep slopes.
- Greater sage grouse populations exist in the vicinity of the proposed project. Impacts to these populations will be evaluated in the EA.
- The proposed pipeline would cross two Colorado State Wildlife Areas (SWAs), Bitter Brush SWA and the Little Hill's Study Area in the Piceance SWA. Although the proposed pipeline would be located within the existing pipeline corridor in these two SWAs (i.e., no new greenfields would be crossed), OPPC has drafted mitigation and restoration plans for these SWAs.